

EDUCATION & LABOR COMMITTEE

Congressman George Miller, Chairman

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Press Office, 202-226-0853

**Chairman Andrews Statement at Subcommittee Hearing on H.R. 2703,
Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act of 2007**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – *Below are the prepared remarks of U.S. Rep. Rob Andrews (D-NJ), chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions, for a subcommittee hearing on “H.R. 2703, Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act of 2007”*

Good morning and welcome to today’s HELP Subcommittee hearing on HR 2703, the Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act (PSOEAA) of 2007.

In 2004, President Bush signed into law the Private Security Officer Employment Authorization Act (PSOEAA). PSOEAA authorizes the security industry to request access to criminal history information for consenting prospective employees from the state. Like the banking, nursing and child care industries, it is essential for private security officer employers to have access to this information in order to ensure that applicants being considered for employment are qualified for the position.

Four years later, many states have yet to prioritize implementation of a timely process for private security employers to obtain background information. These implementation issues combined with the failure of several states to even establish a background check process has left us vulnerable.

To address this flaw in the protection of our homeland, I have introduced HR 2703, “The Private Security Officers Act of 2007.” HR 2703 ensures that private security employers protecting our critical infrastructure conduct criminal background checks on all potential employees.

Specifically, HR 2703: (1) prohibits private security employers from hiring guards without obtaining certain state criminal history information; (2) requires a process to allow private security guard employees or applicants to challenge the accuracy or completeness of their criminal history records; (3) specifies the crimes for which states must provide conviction information to such employers; (4) imposes confidentiality and recordkeeping requirements on such employers; and (5) protects such employers from liability for good faith employment determinations based upon available criminal history information.

Since 85 percent of our critical infrastructure such as power plants, oil and gas refineries, chemical plants, communication networks, schools, and hospitals are monitored and protected by the private security industry, I believe it is imperative that these employers have access to an applicant’s criminal background information with the proper safeguards in place to protect their information. I thank all the witnesses for coming before the committee today and look forward to hearing their testimony.

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